

REMARKS

Applicants' undersigned attorney thanks the Examiner for her comments. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this patent application, particularly in view of the above Amendment and the following remarks. Currently, Claims 1-40 are pending

Amendment to the Claims

Claims 1-40 have been examined, with no claims being allowed. Claims 1, 20, 27, and 34 have been amended to include the limitation of the liner being coextensive with the composite structure and attached to the composite structure along the perimeter of the composite structure and unattached to the composite structure in the central region of the composite structure. Support for this limitation is provided in Claims 8, 21, 31, and 39; and at page 23, line 1 – page 24, line 12; and in Figs. 6B, 7A, 7B, 8A, 8B, 9A, and 9B, for example. Applicants respectfully request cancellation of Claims 8, 21, 31, and 39.

No new matter has been added by this Amendment. No additional fee is required because the number of independent claims remains unchanged and the total number of claims has been reduced.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

The rejection of Claims 1-5, 7-12, 20-23, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Mizutani al. (U.S. 2002/0028624, hereinafter "Mizutani") is respectfully traversed.

Mizutani fails to disclose a garment that includes a continuous mesh liner that is coextensive with a composite structure and is attached to the composite structure along a perimeter of the composite structure and is unattached to the composite structure in a central region of the composite structure.

Instead, Mizutani discloses a garment that includes a surface layer 10 that includes a porous film 11 having a plurality of through holes and a fibrous layer 12 disposed on the liquid-receiving face of the porous film. The fibrous layer is made up of a plurality of strips extending in parallel and spaced apart from each other such

that the porous film is exposed between adjacent strips of the fibrous layer. The strips are not coextensive with the surface layer 10, as shown in Fig. 1. Furthermore, as clearly shown in Fig. 1, the strips are not attached to the surface layer along a perimeter of the composite structure, since the perimeter of the composite structure extends well past the strips in both the longitudinal and transverse directions. Also, as clearly shown in Fig. 2, the strips are not unattached to the composite structure in a central region within the perimeter of the composite structure. Fig. 2 is a partial section view of the absorbent article in Fig. 1, and Fig. 2 clearly shows that the strips are attached to the composite structure in the central region of the composite structure.

For at least the reasons presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-5, 7-12, 20-23, and 26 are not anticipated by Mizutani. Thus, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

The rejection of Claims 6, 13-17, 24-25, and 27-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizutani is respectfully traversed.

As explained above, Mizutani fails to disclose a garment that includes a continuous mesh or liquid-permeable liner that is coextensive with a composite structure and is attached to the composite structure along a perimeter of the composite structure and is unattached to the composite structure in a central region of the composite structure. Furthermore, there is no suggestion to modify the garment in Mizutani to achieve a continuous mesh or liquid-permeable liner that is coextensive with the composite structure and is attached to the composite structure along the perimeter of the composite structure and unattached to the composite structure in the central region of the composite structure.

As explained above, Mizutani clearly teaches away from a continuous mesh or liquid-permeable liner that is coextensive with the composite structure. Instead, Mizutani provides a number of reasons for providing the fibrous layer 12 in the form of separate strips.

Moreover, because the strips are secured to the underlying porous film at various points along their length, and are thus *attached* to the composite structure


in the central region, there is no reasonable expectation of successfully achieving Applicants' claimed invention in which the mesh or liquid-permeable liner is attached to the composite structure along the perimeter of the composite structure and unattached to the composite structure in the central region of the composite structure.

For at least the reasons given above, Applicants respectfully submit that the teachings of Mizutani fail to disclose or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants intend to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. If the Examiner detects any issue which the Examiner believes Applicants have not addressed in this response, Applicants' undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,


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